ECLIPSE COMICS
DON McGREGOR • MARSHALL ROGERS
Detectives Inc.™
No. 2
$1.75
$2.25 in Canada
FOR MATURE AUDIENCES

The PENUMBRA

ECLIPSE COMICS • P. O. BOX 199 • GUERNEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95446

ON THE RACKS

DNAGENTS no. 21 The mercenary group from DNAGENTS no. 1 is back — with Tank as their newest member! "Mind Set" is by Evanier, Schauer and Blyberg.

AZTEC ACE no. 12 "Bloody Pulp" takes Bridget back to San Francisco 1940 one more time, as she and Ace become involved in gang warfare and a disease of the blood..

MASKED MAN no. 3 The Architectural Terrorists are back, along with Aphid-Man, in a B.C. Boyer extravaganza called "There Are No Heroes." Plus "Security Man."

STRANGE DAYS no. 3 Paradax versus V.2 Pinhead! Johnny Nemo versus the Sirians! The Drifter versus Death! The mini-series concludes! Milligan, Ewins & MCarthy forever!

CROSSFIRE no. 10 "Cadaver Goes to Hollywood" In this off-beat tale by Mark Evanier and Dan Spiegle — as Crossfire hunts the man from a previous century.

DETECTIVES INC 1 The first half of the "Micro-Series" by Don McGregor & Marshall Rogers, in which Ted & Bob face death — & meet a midwife whose lover has been killed.

SABRE no. 13 "The Decadence Indoctrination" by Don McGregor & Jose Ortiz continues, as danger lurks on the beach and intrigue brews in Roanoke!

Have you ever wondered how a newcomer to comics — a production assistant, for example — can rise up through the ranks to the semi-exalted position of Assistant Editor quicker than you can say, "Piece o' cake"?

Well, here's a little story, a moral lesson worthy of Horation Alger, about the day that Sean Deming, Brand-New Production Assistant, proved himself worthy of promotion to the rank of Assistant Editor and All-Around Hero of the Office.

We've been here in our California office almost two years now. The first week we were here, we bought a new photocopy machine. The only trouble was, there was just one three-prong outlet, and people were always tripping over it. That was okay, but when we bought a computer, we had to rig another extension cable to the three-prong outlet.

Now if you ever worked with a computer, you know what happens when somebody trips over the cord and accidentally unplugs you: instant memory wipe-out of everything not stored on the diskette. To avoid accidental disconnection of the computer, we gave it a bright orange cable . . . and we crossed our fingers a lot.

Okay, so here comes Sean, new kid in the office. We show him where the X-acto knives go, and how to put paper in the copier, and all the other diddly little things that make office life so wonderful. And after a couple of days i ask him if he has ever had experience with word-processing, and can he use a computer? "No sweat," he says. (His exact words, i remember them well.) So i give him the big lecture about the orange extension cable and the three-prong outlet, which is way the heck on the other side of a wall, around a corner and behind a Coke machine. He listens and says, "No sweat." (His exact words.)

So i go away and leave him to his fate. He won't find the outlet, or he'll trip over the extension cable and wipe out a dozen paragraphs. I know he will, on account of guys who say, "No sweat" like that are cruisin' for a bruisin'.

But half an hour goes by, and all I hear is the tickety tick of the keyboard and the wrr-chkk of the disk drive, and nothing's going wrong. I can't believe it. Nobody has tripped over the extension cable. How come?

When i go over for a closer look, i see a sight i am totally unprepared for. Sean has plugged the cord into a three-prong outlet right NEXT to the computer! No horrible orange extension cable through the door, around the corner and behind the Coke machine!

I've never seen that three-prong outlet before in my life!

"Oh, says Sean, looking up most casually as Dean and i stutter and sputter over this miracle, "I thought it'd be better to plug it in over here. It's closer."

B-b-but where did that new three-prong outlet materialize from?

"Piece o' cake," says Sean. "It was right here all along. You guys just must have overlooked it somehow."

And that, folks, is why i predict that Sean Deming is a name you'll be seeing more of soon. (Hint: check out **ALIEN ENCOUNTERS** no. 1, shipping in june.)

catherine yronwode

IN YOUR HANDS

For my wife, Marsha . . .
Who taught me life could be a celebration and reconfirmed that romance is more than just a word . . .
. . . for her touch in November . . .
. . . for warmer, brighter nights and the promise of enchanting days . . .
. . . and for her courage through the frightening economic horrors until this book reached its audience.
This one's for her.

Love,
Don

DETECTIVES INC. No. 2, April 1985. Published by Eclipse Comics, P.O. Box 199, Guerneville, CA 95446. Catherine Yronwode, Editor-in-Chief. Dean Mullaney, Editor and Publisher. Detectives, Inc. TM and © 1980, 1985 Don McGregor and Marshall Rogers. Text © 1985 Don McGregor. All other material © 1985 Eclipse Comics. The stories, characters, events and places in this magazine are entirely fictional. Printed in Canada.

Our story thus far...

When Ted Denning and Bob Rainier went to a South Bronx rooftop to bring Randy Wilson home to his father, they didn't count on ending up in the middle of a murder scene . . . with one of them having pulled the trigger!

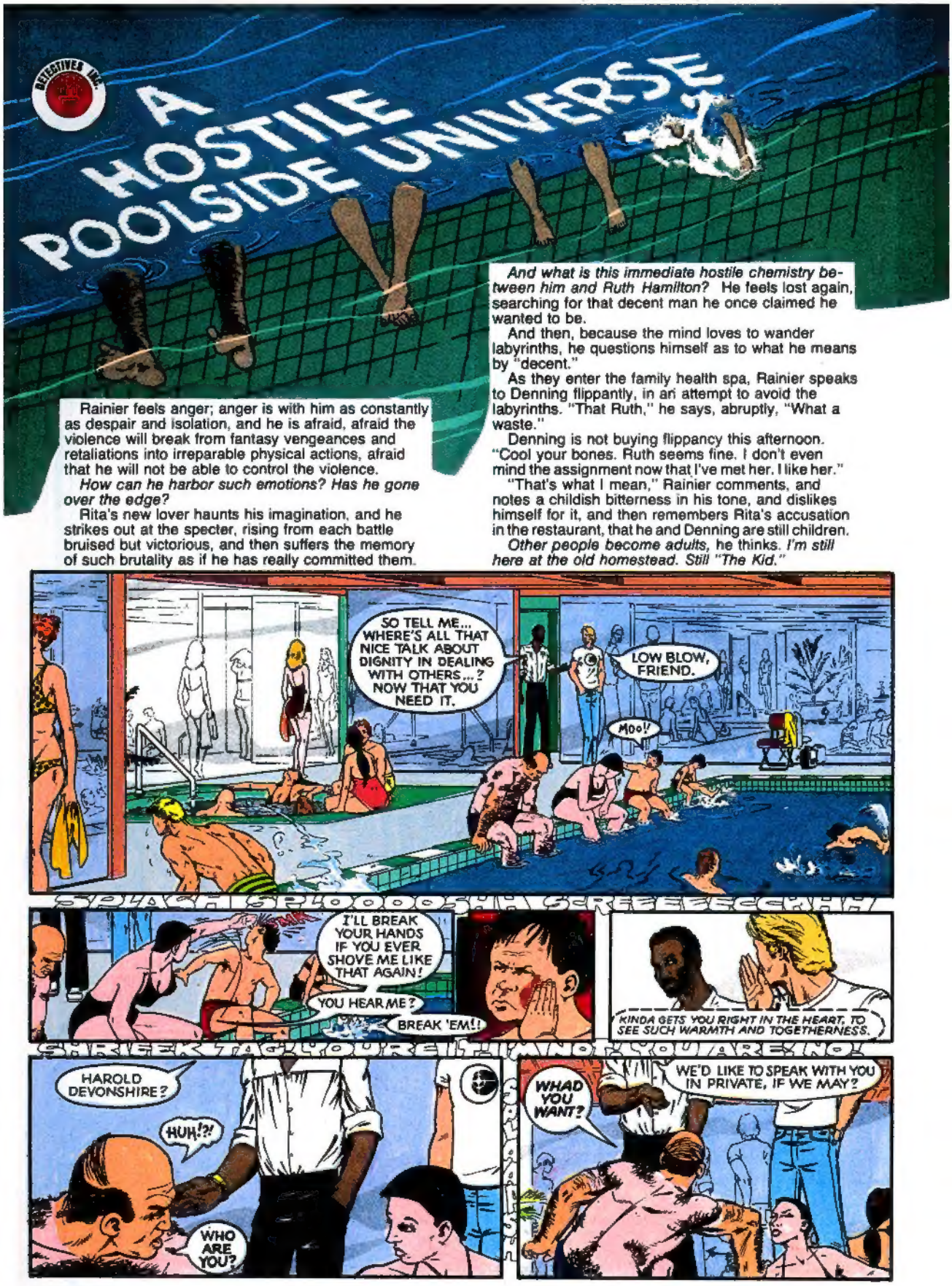
It's all in a day's work for the pair who call themselves "Detectives, Inc." But the death of a young man — even a young hoodlum — is not something either of our heroes can take lightly. Ted Denning, days later, is still trying to come to grips with the fact that he's killed a man.

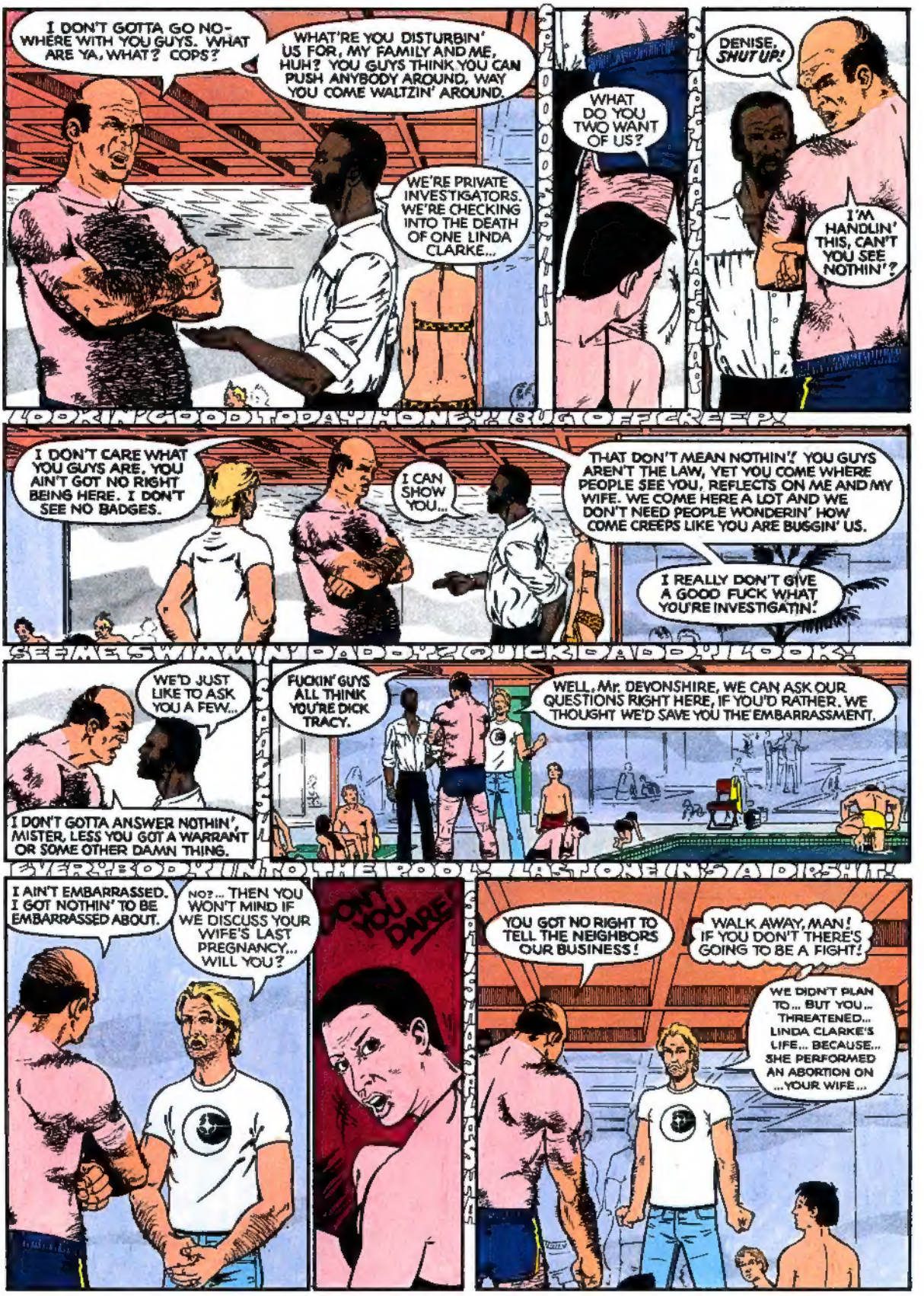
His partner, Bob Rainier, who is trying to come to grips with his own problems — namely his recent divorce — has found a new case for the pair. It seems his ex-wife Rita had a friend who was murdered — a mid-wife named Linda Clarke, who, it turns out, was a lesbian.

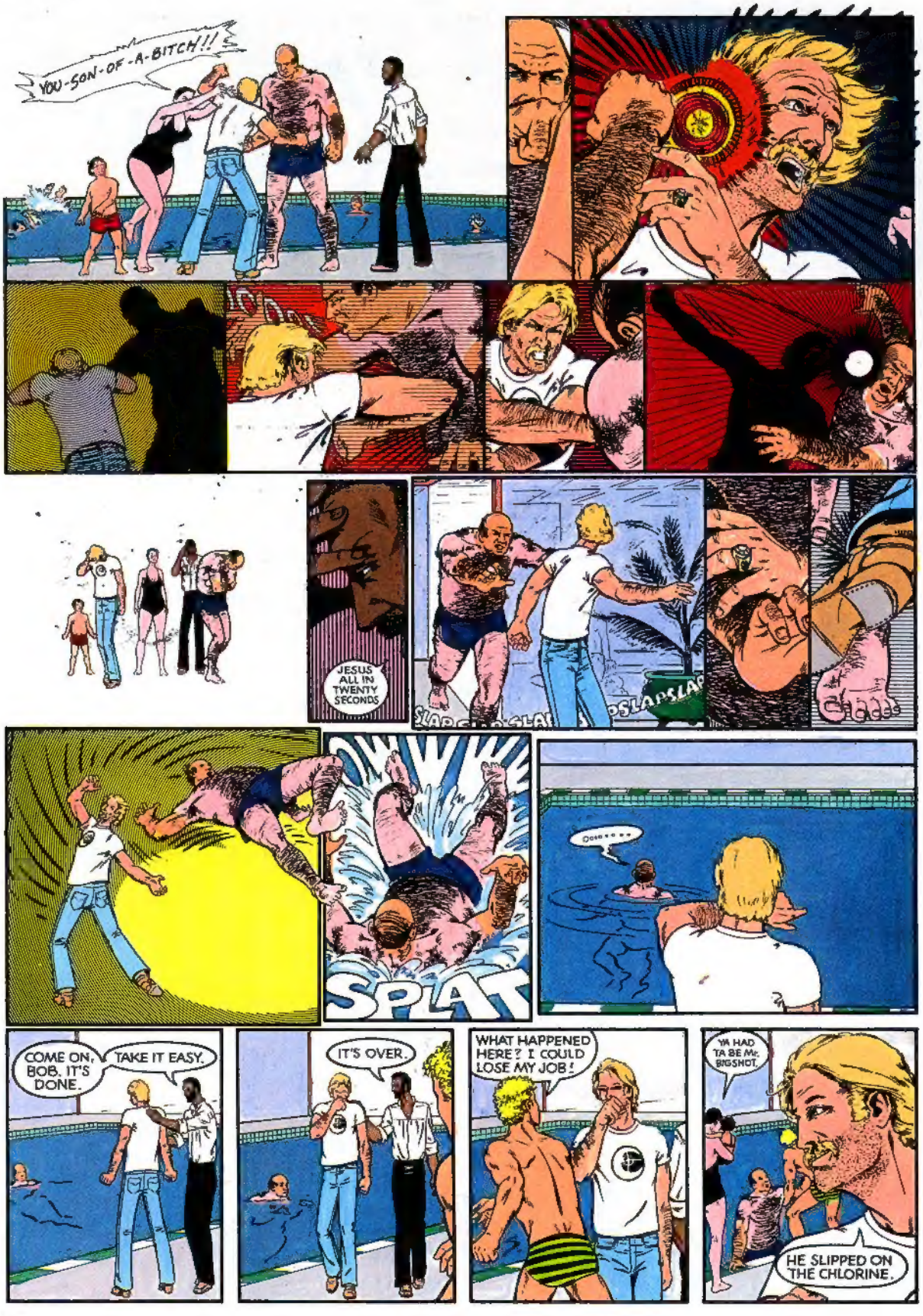
Denning and Rainier question Linda's lover, Ruth Hamilton, at the hospital where she works. Ruth explains how the police considered Linda's death "a hit-and-run." Ruth believes otherwise. She tells them of some possible suspects, including Dr. Moses Rafferty, an obstetrician who resented Linda because she was a mid-wife, and Harold Devonshire, who threatened to kill Linda for performing an abortion for his wife.

Before Ruth can get too far, the conversation is interrupted and the detectives are introduced to Dr. Lloyd Kennedy and Dr. Curtis Blakesley, both of whom consider Ruth unduly obsessed with Linda's death.

As Ruth reminisces about her relationship with Linda, our detectives leave and begin their investigation as we fade into Chapter 5 . . .


DETECTIVES INC.
A HOSTILE POOLSIDE UNIVERSE
Rainier feels anger; anger is with him as constantly as despair and isolation, and he is afraid, afraid the violence will break from fantasy vengeances and retaliations into irreparable physical actions, afraid that he will not be able to control the violence.
How can he harbor such emotions? Has he gone over the edge?
Rita's new lover haunts his imagination, and he strikes out at the specter, rising from each battle bruised but victorious, and then suffers the memory of such brutality as if he has really committed them.
And what is this immediate hostile chemistry between him and Ruth Hamilton? He feels lost again, searching for that decent man he once claimed he wanted to be.
And then, because the mind loves to wander labyrinths, he questions himself as to what he means by "decent."
As they enter the family health spa, Rainier speaks to Denning flippantly, in an attempt to avoid the labyrinths. "That Ruth," he says, abruptly, "What a waste."
Denning is not buying flippancy this afternoon. "Cool your bones. Ruth seems fine. I don't even mind the assignment now that I've met her. I like her."
"That's what I mean," Rainier comments, and notes a childish bitterness in his tone, and dislikes himself for it, and then remembers Rita's accusation in the restaurant, that he and Denning are still children.
Other people become adults, he thinks. I'm still here at the old homestead. Still "The Kid."
SO TELL ME... WHERE'S ALL THAT NICE TALK ABOUT DIGNITY IN DEALING WITH OTHERS...? NOW THAT YOU NEED IT.
LOW BLOW, FRIEND.
MOO!
SPLASH! SPLOOOOSH! A SCREEEECHHH
I'LL BREAK YOUR HANDS IF YOU EVER SHOVE ME LIKE THAT AGAIN!
YOU HEAR ME?
BREAK 'EM!!
KINDA GETS YOU RIGHT IN THE HEART, TO SEE SUCH WARMTH AND TOGETHERNESS.
SCREECH! TAG! YOU'RE IT! NO, YOU ARE! NO!
HAROLD DEVONSHIRE?
HUH!?!
WHO ARE YOU?
WHAD YOU WANT?
WE'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU IN PRIVATE, IF WE MAY?


I DON'T GOTTA GO NOWHERE WITH YOU GUYS. WHAT ARE YA, WHAT? COPS?
WHAT'RE YOU DISTURBIN' US FOR, MY FAMILY AND ME, HUH? YOU GUYS THINK YOU CAN PUSH ANYBODY AROUND, WAY YOU COME WALTZIN' AROUND.
WE'RE PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS. WE'RE CHECKING INTO THE DEATH OF ONE LINDA CLARKE...
WHAT DO YOU TWO WANT OF US?
DENISE, SHUT UP!
I'M HANDLIN' THIS, CAN'T YOU SEE NOTHIN'?
LOOKIN'GOODTODAYHONEY!BUGOFFCREEP!
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU GUYS ARE. YOU AIN'T GOT NO RIGHT BEING HERE. I DON'T SEE NO BADGES.
I CAN SHOW YOU...
THAT DON'T MEAN NOTHIN'! YOU GUYS AREN'T THE LAW, YET YOU COME WHERE PEOPLE SEE YOU, REFLECTS ON ME AND MY WIFE. WE COME HERE A LOT AND WE DON'T NEED PEOPLE WONDERIN' HOW COME CREEPS LIKE YOU ARE BUGGIN' US.
I REALLY DON'T GIVE A GOOD FUCK WHAT YOU'RE INVESTIGATIN'
SEEMESWIMMINDADDY?QUICKDADDYLOOK!
WE'D JUST LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW...
I DON'T GOTTA ANSWER NOTHIN', MISTER, LESS YOU GOT A WARRANT OR SOME OTHER DAMN THING.
FUCKIN' GUYS ALL THINK YOU'RE DICK TRACY.
WELL, Mr. DEVONSHIRE, WE CAN ASK OUR QUESTIONS RIGHT HERE, IF YOU'D RATHER. WE THOUGHT WE'D SAVE YOU THE EMBARRASSMENT.
EVERYBODYJUMPINTOTHEPOOL!LASTONEINSADIRTY!
I AIN'T EMBARRASSED. I GOT NOTHIN' TO BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT.
NO?... THEN YOU WON'T MIND IF WE DISCUSS YOUR WIFE'S LAST PREGNANCY... WILL YOU?
OH! YOU DARE!
YOU GOT NO RIGHT TO TELL THE NEIGHBORS OUR BUSINESS!
WALK AWAY, MAN! IF YOU DON'T THERE'S GOING TO BE A FIGHT!
WE DIDN'T PLAN TO... BUT YOU... THREATENED... LINDA CLARKE'S LIFE... BECAUSE... SHE PERFORMED AN ABORTION ON ...YOUR WIFE...

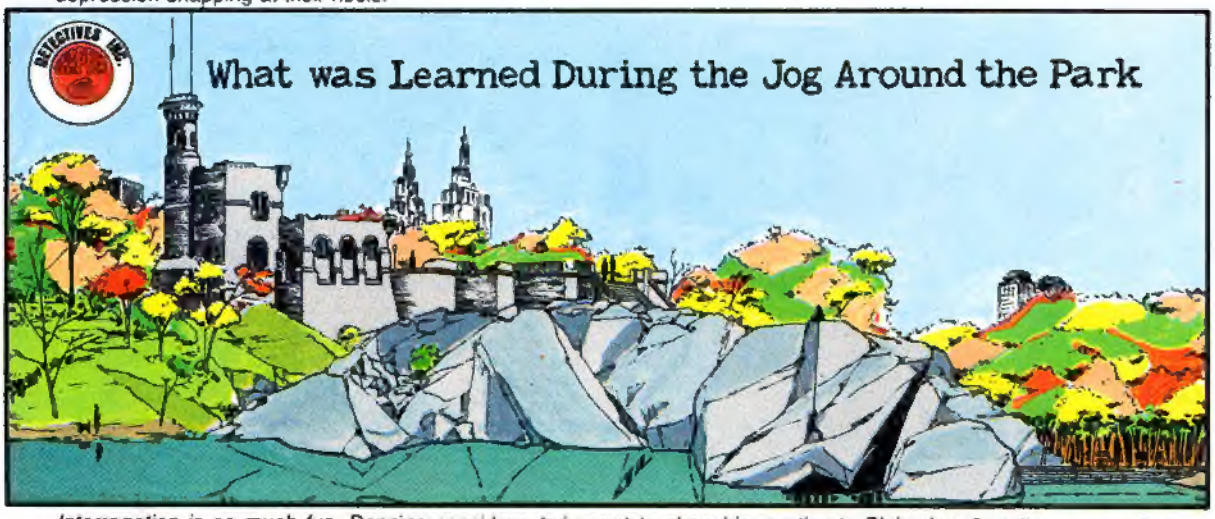

YOU-SON-OF-A-BITCH!!!
JESUS ALL IN TWENTY SECONDS
SLAPSLAP
SPLAT
COME ON, BOB. IT'S DONE.
TAKE IT EASY.
IT'S OVER.
WHAT HAPPENED HERE? I COULD LOSE MY JOB!
YA HAD TA BE Mr. BIGSHOT.
HE SLIPPED ON THE CHLORINE.

In the nightmare, the gun is fired, endlessly.

Flame bursts out of the barrel, and the sound is deafening, and the human target spills brains and blood into the air. The figure falls, lies in its own blood. His finger is still on the trigger, now slick with oil and his sweat, as he waits for the next threatening person to appear

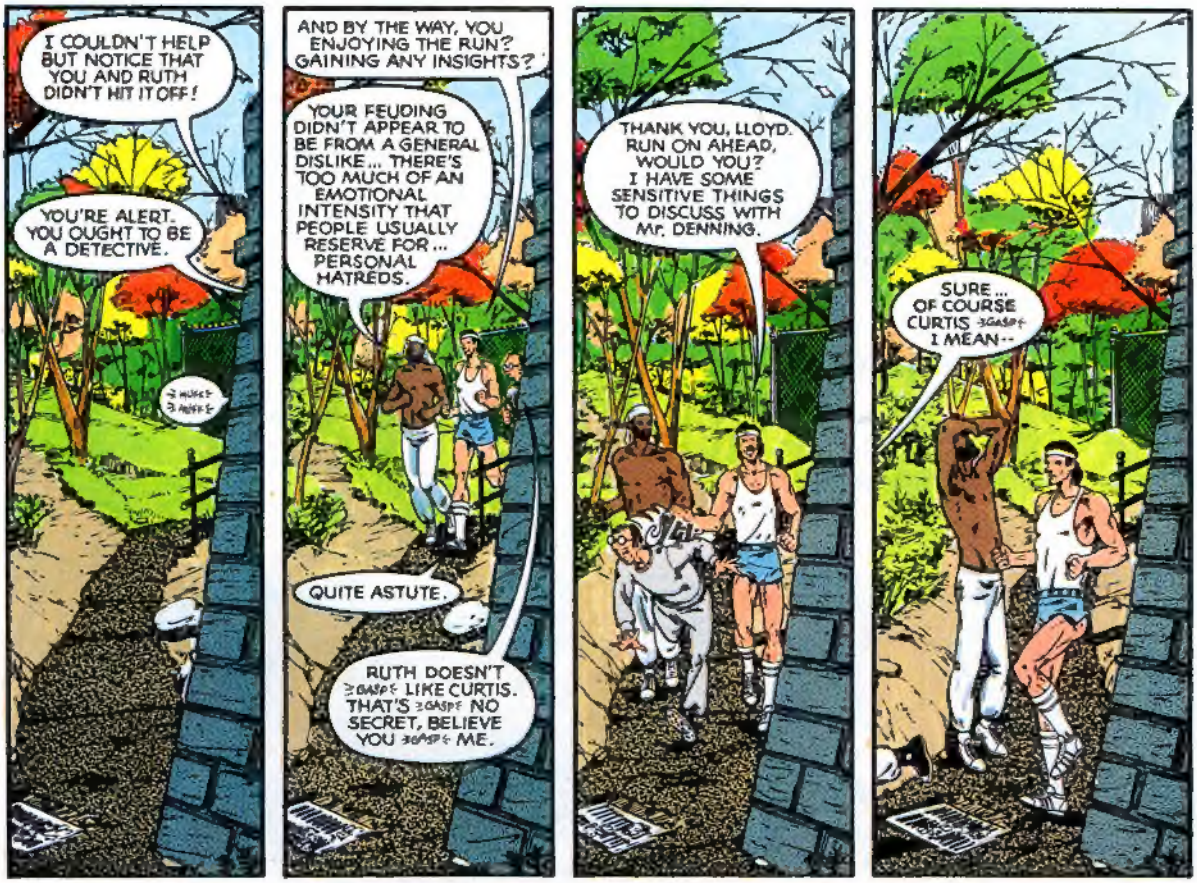
Perhaps jogging around Central Park with Curtis Blakesley and Lloyd Kennedy will dispel some of his depression, Denning hopes, and if it's the only way he is going to clear up his suspicions, then he will have to endure the rigorous, almost religious comments from Blakesley and Kennedy about "carbohydrate loading" and "cardiorespiratory fitness" and "hitting the wall."

The park is filled with joggers, a herd outfitted with Adidas as they set off with lemming-like determination, depression snapping at their heels.



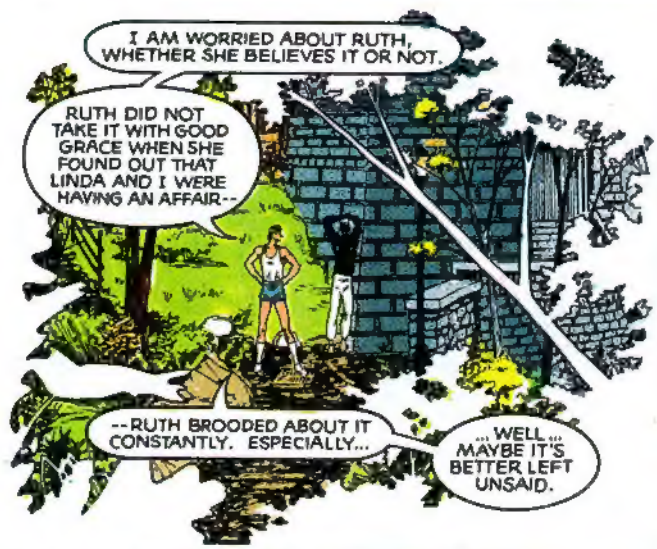
Interrogation is so much fun, Denning considers, trying not to show his exertion to Blakesley. *So tell me, son, why did you decide to become a detective?*

Answer me that one.


I COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THAT YOU AND RUTH DIDN'T HIT IT OFF!
YOU'RE ALERT. YOU OUGHT TO BE A DETECTIVE.
AND BY THE WAY, YOU ENJOYING THE RUN? GAINING ANY INSIGHTS?
YOUR FEUDING DIDN'T APPEAR TO BE FROM A GENERAL DISLIKE... THERE'S TOO MUCH OF AN EMOTIONAL INTENSITY THAT PEOPLE USUALLY RESERVE FOR... PERSONAL HATREDS.
QUITE ASTUTE.
RUTH DOESN'T GASP LIKE CURTIS. THAT'S GASP NO SECRET, BELIEVE YOU GASP ME.
THANK YOU, LLOYD. RUN ON AHEAD, WOULD YOU? I HAVE SOME SENSITIVE THINGS TO DISCUSS WITH Mr. DENNING.
SURE... OF COURSE CURTIS GASP I MEAN--

... IF YOU DON'T TRUST ME, WELL
BUT TRUST A
A ... TOTAL STRANGER
SO BE IT.

IS THIS WHERE YOU LAY IT ON ME THAT YOU AND LINDA CLARKE WERE LOVERS?
WELL NOW, YOU ARE ASTOUNDING. I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS THAT TRANSPARENT.
YOU AREN'T. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I'M NOT.

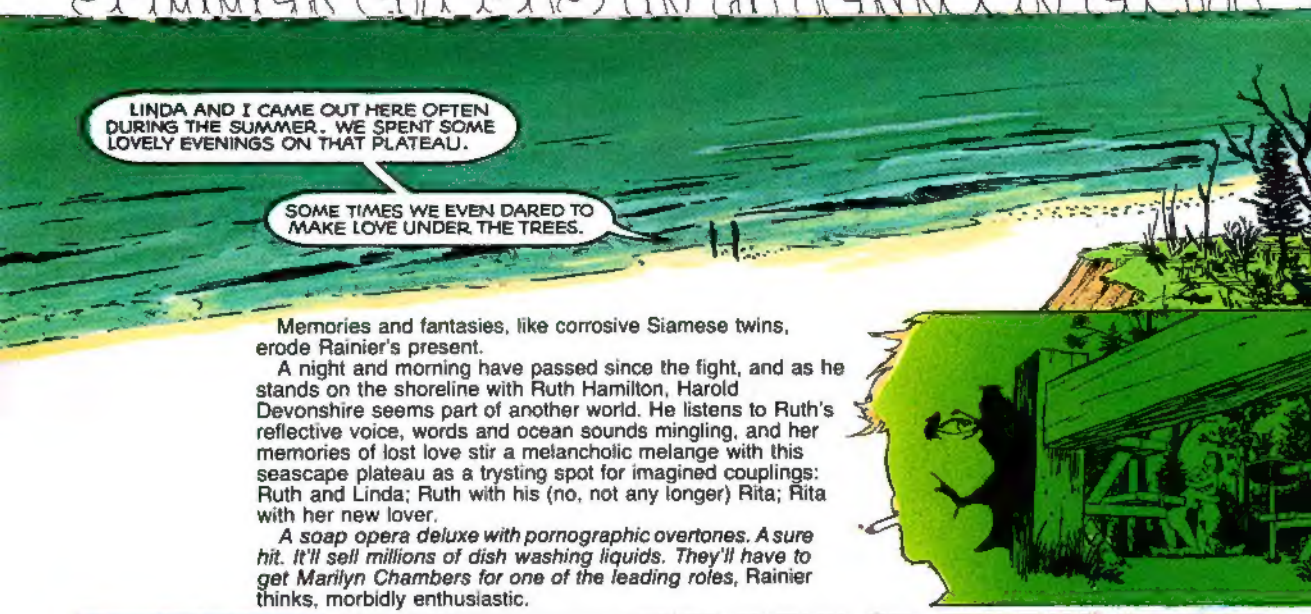

I AM WORRIED ABOUT RUTH, WHETHER SHE BELIEVES IT OR NOT.
RUTH DID NOT TAKE IT WITH GOOD GRACE WHEN SHE FOUND OUT THAT LINDA AND I WERE HAVING AN AFFAIR--
--RUTH BROODED ABOUT IT CONSTANTLY. ESPECIALLY...
... WELL ... MAYBE IT'S BETTER LEFT UNSAID.

LET'S SAY IT AND PUT A STOP TO THE GUESSING GAMES. BE EASIER FOR ALL OF US.

ALL RIGHT. HAVE IT YOUR WAY. LINDA WAS GOING TO BREAK IT OFF WITH RUTH-- TURN STRAIGHT--
RUTH COULDN'T HANDLE IT. YOU SEE, LINDA AND I...
...WERE GOING TO BE...

...MARRIED.

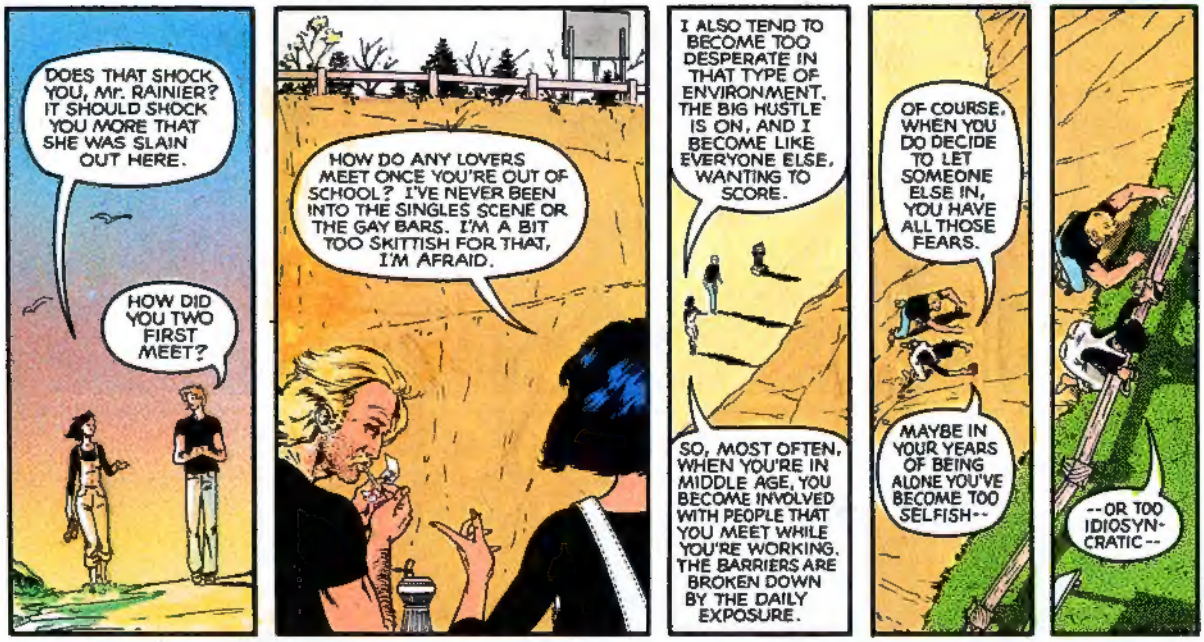
SUMMER GHOSTS IN AFTERNOON LIGHT


LINDA AND I CAME OUT HERE OFTEN DURING THE SUMMER. WE SPENT SOME LOVELY EVENINGS ON THAT PLATEAU.
SOME TIMES WE EVEN DARED TO MAKE LOVE UNDER THE TREES.

Memories and fantasies, like corrosive Siamese twins, erode Rainier's present.

A night and morning have passed since the fight, and as he stands on the shoreline with Ruth Hamilton, Harold Devonshire seems part of another world. He listens to Ruth's reflective voice, words and ocean sounds mingling, and her memories of lost love stir a melancholic melange with this seascape plateau as a trysting spot for imagined couplings: Ruth and Linda; Ruth with his (no, not any longer) Rita; Rita with her new lover.

A soap opera deluxe with pornographic overtones. A sure hit. It'll sell millions of dish washing liquids. They'll have to get Marilyn Chambers for one of the leading roles, Rainier thinks, morbidly enthusiastic.


DOES THAT SHOCK YOU, Mr. RAINIER? IT SHOULD SHOCK YOU MORE THAT SHE WAS SLAIN OUT HERE.
HOW DID YOU TWO FIRST MEET?
HOW DO ANY LOVERS MEET ONCE YOU'RE OUT OF SCHOOL? I'VE NEVER BEEN INTO THE SINGLES SCENE OR THE GAY BARS. I'M A BIT TOO SKITTISH FOR THAT, I'M AFRAID.
I ALSO TEND TO BECOME TOO DESPERATE IN THAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT. THE BIG HUSTLE IS ON, AND I BECOME LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, WANTING TO SCORE.
SO, MOST OFTEN, WHEN YOU'RE IN MIDDLE AGE, YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH PEOPLE THAT YOU MEET WHILE YOU'RE WORKING. THE BARRIERS ARE BROKEN DOWN BY THE DAILY EXPOSURE.
OF COURSE, WHEN YOU DO DECIDE TO LET SOMEONE ELSE IN, YOU HAVE ALL THOSE FEARS.
MAYBE IN YOUR YEARS OF BEING ALONE YOU'VE BECOME TOO SELFISH--
--OR TOO IDIOSYN-CRATIC--

--AND THEN, ALMOST LIKE A MIRACLE, YOU FIND A PERSON WHO COMPLEMENTS YOU. THEY GIVE YOU THE STRENGTH TO DO THE THINGS YOU HAVE TO DO ALONE.

Oh, I KNOW THE WORD MIRACLE SOUNDS GUSHY, BUT WHEN YOUR LIFE IS REVERSED FROM A NEGATIVE COURSE--

-- THAT PERSON SEEMS LIKE NOTHING ELSE. WHAT DO YOU THINK, Mr. RAINIER?

Uh, EXCUSE ME. Uhm, I--

--I LOST TRACK THERE FOR A MOMENT.

YOU WEREN'T LISTENING.

I HEARD MOST OF IT.

I HEARD THE TONE OF YOUR VOICE, AND IT BROUGHT BACK A SUMMER I HAD.

A FRIGHTENING SUMMER.

HOW ABOUT A TRUCE? I'LL DO THE LISTENING FOR A BIT. I'M NOT USED TO REVEALING SO MUCH ABOUT MY LIFE.

THESE DAYS IT SEEMS THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE IS TO KEEP TALKING ABOUT IT. I GUESS I HOPE I'LL MAKE SOME SENSE OUT OF IT IF I FIND THE WAY TO ARTICULATE WHAT I FEEL.

YES. AND YOU THINK YOU'LL DIE... GO INSANE, IF YOU KEEP IT INSIDE--

--AND YOU BORE YOUR FRIENDS, BUT YOU CAN'T STOP REPLAYING ALL THE SCENES OVER AND OVER... DID YOU MAKE A MISTAKE HERE... OR THERE...

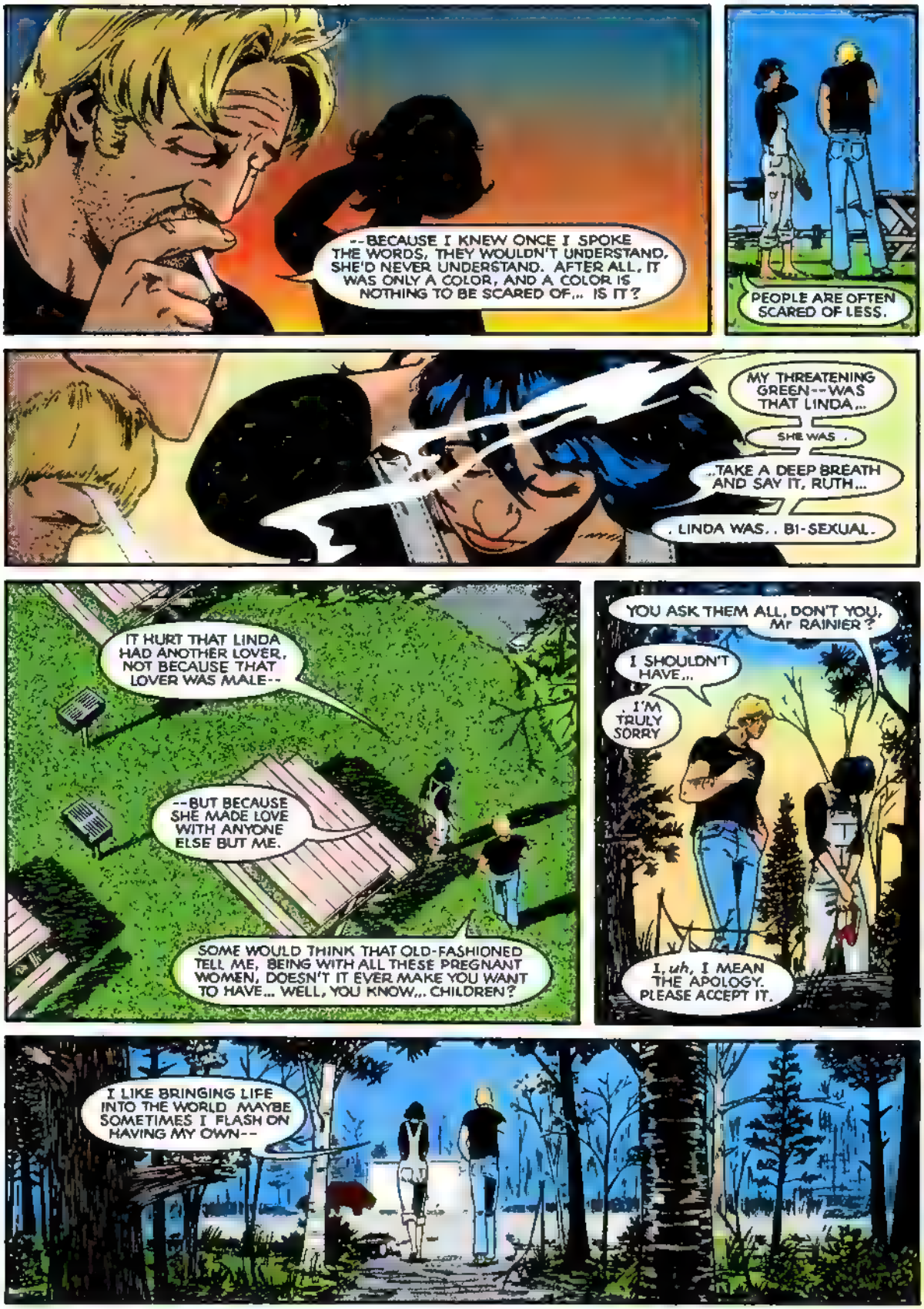
I KEEP RECALLING THAT LAST SUMMER MY EX-WIFE AND I HAD... AND WHAT I REMEMBER MOST IS THE GREEN... OF THE TREES... THE GRASS... GREEN ALL AROUND US... THE GREEN TOWERING ABOVE US, VIVIDLY--

--ALL THE PEOPLE BLEACHED AGAINST THIS WALL OF GREEN... THEIR CLOTHES, THEIR FLESH, ALL PALE, FADING... I WANTED TO REACH OUT, TOUCH THEM, TOUCH HER, BUT THEY WERE LOST, SHE WAS LOST IN THE GREEN!

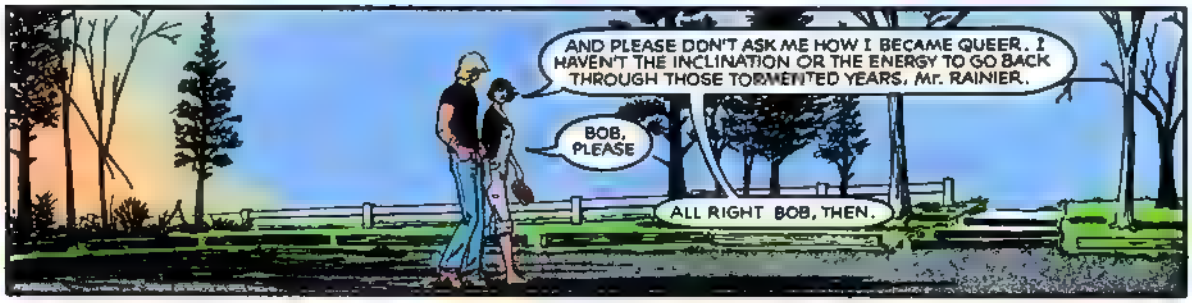
THE LANDSCAPE WAS MORE REAL THAN US, MORE PERMANENT, AND I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND EXACTLY, BUT I WAS AFRAID OF WHAT ALL THE GREEN SUDDENLY TOLD ME, SUDDENLY MADE ME REALIZE ABOUT OUR LIVES... MOSTLY, I GUESS, ABOUT MY OWN LIFE.

I SAT IN THE SUN AND IT WAS WARM, BUT I WAS STILL HAUNTED. I CLOSED MY EYES, AND STILL SAW THE GREEN, LIKE IT WAS DEVOURING US... LEAVING GHOSTS AS RESIDUE... AND I COULDN'T FORCE MYSELF TO MOVE, TO SCREAM--

"THE GREEN IS GOING TO GET US"--


--BECAUSE I KNEW ONCE I SPOKE THE WORDS, THEY WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND. SHE'D NEVER UNDERSTAND. AFTER ALL, IT WAS ONLY A COLOR, AND A COLOR IS NOTHING TO BE SCARED OF... IS IT?
PEOPLE ARE OFTEN SCARED OF LESS.
MY THREATENING GREEN--WAS THAT LINDA...
SHE WAS .
..TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND SAY IT, RUTH...
. LINDA WAS.. BI-SEXUAL.
IT HURT THAT LINDA HAD ANOTHER LOVER, NOT BECAUSE THAT LOVER WAS MALE--
--BUT BECAUSE SHE MADE LOVE WITH ANYONE ELSE BUT ME.
SOME WOULD THINK THAT OLD-FASHIONED TELL ME, BEING WITH ALL THESE PREGNANT WOMEN, DOESN'T IT EVER MAKE YOU WANT TO HAVE... WELL, YOU KNOW... CHILDREN?
YOU ASK THEM ALL, DON'T YOU, Mr RAINIER?
I SHOULDN'T HAVE...
I'M TRULY SORRY
I, uh, I MEAN THE APOLOGY. PLEASE ACCEPT IT.
I LIKE BRINGING LIFE INTO THE WORLD. MAYBE SOMETIMES I FLASH ON HAVING MY OWN--

--BUT IT'S NOT A BE-ALL AND END-ALL COMPULSION...
... AND WHAT I HAD WITH LINDA WAS WHAT I WANTED


AND PLEASE DON'T ASK ME HOW I BECAME QUEER. I HAVEN'T THE INCLINATION OR THE ENERGY TO GO BACK THROUGH THOSE TORMENTED YEARS, Mr. RAINIER.
BOB, PLEASE
ALL RIGHT BOB, THEN.

IT WAS SOMEWHERE NEAR HERE WHERE SHE BLED TO DEATH
I KEEP HOPING SHE WASN'T CONSCIOUS. MY POOR DARLING.
I HATE MYSELF FOR IT, BUT I KEEP WONDERING IF. THE NIGHT SHE WAS KILLED... IF SHE'D COME OUT HERE TO MAKE LOVE WITH SOMEONE ELSE.

I KNOW IT SHOULDN'T BE IMPORTANT, NOT NOW THAT SHE'S GONE

SO THAT'S HOW YOU KNEW
ABOUT WHAT?

ABOUT THE REAL FEAR OF THE GREEN.
I'M THERE, NOW
YES

I GUESS..
YOU ARE

CONFRONTATION

The tree branches are limned against the dark night sky by a solitary street light, and the network of branches resembles a glistening spider's web

Ah, for the webs, like the mazes of October, Denning thinks, waiting

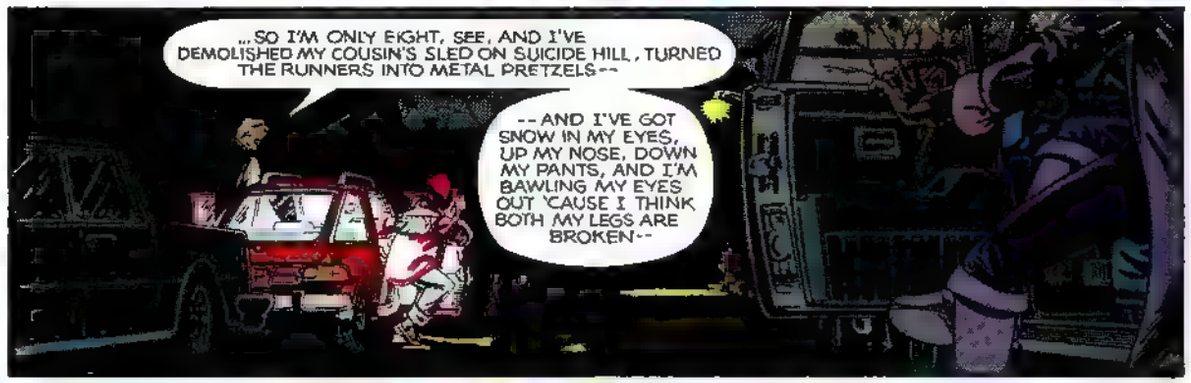
October. How the hell could he know October would change his whole damned life?

Nearly two hours pass and he is ready to give it up, ready to travel towards Vera's warmth, when Rainier and Ruth arrive He hears their laughter

Bob hasn't laughed in too long a time, even his banter has an intensity about it, like a strung chord near snapping, but quite possibly, Denning reflects, sadly, *he has chosen the wrong damned time to do so.*

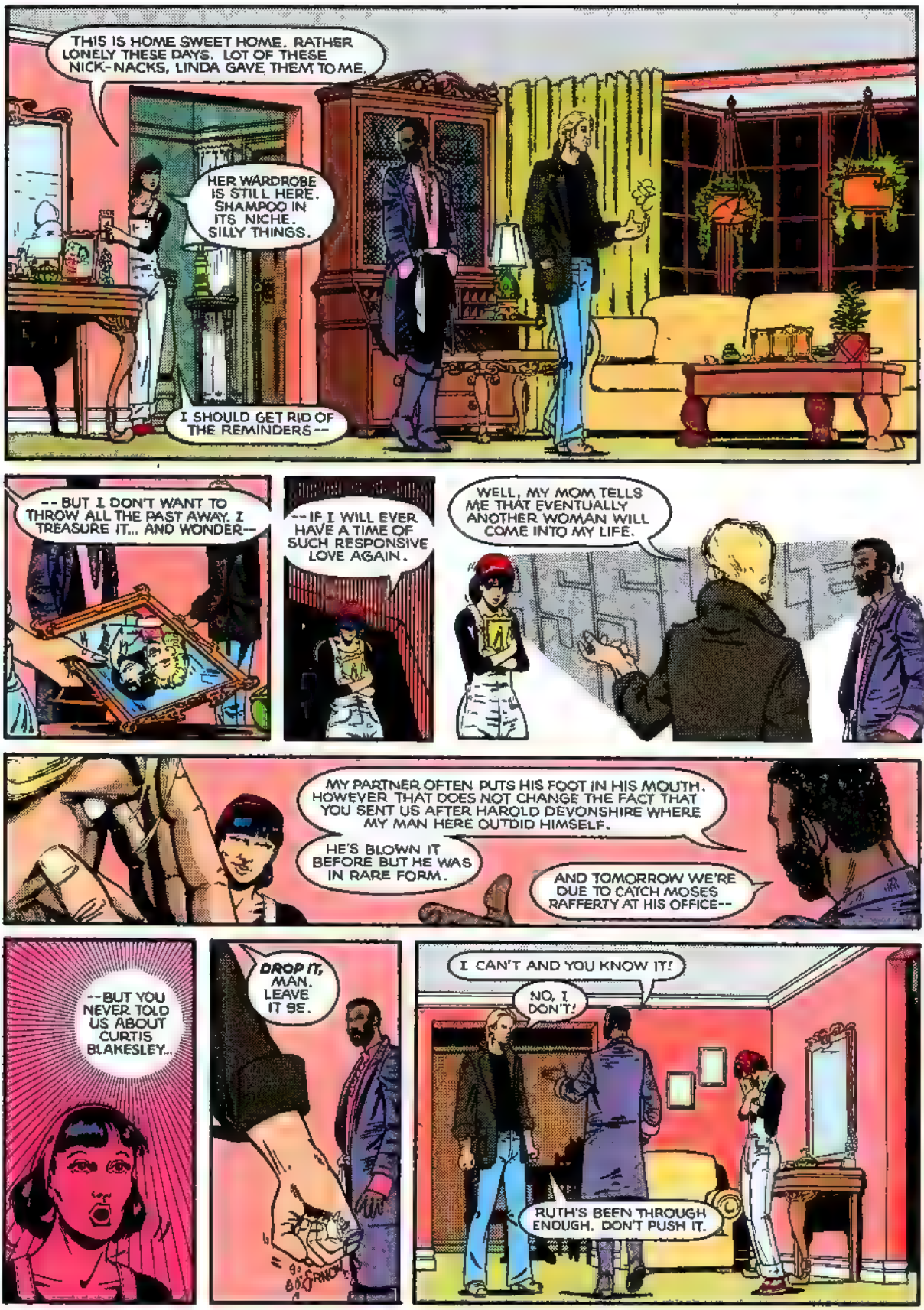
He confronts the two, knowing what has to be done, and not looking forward to it

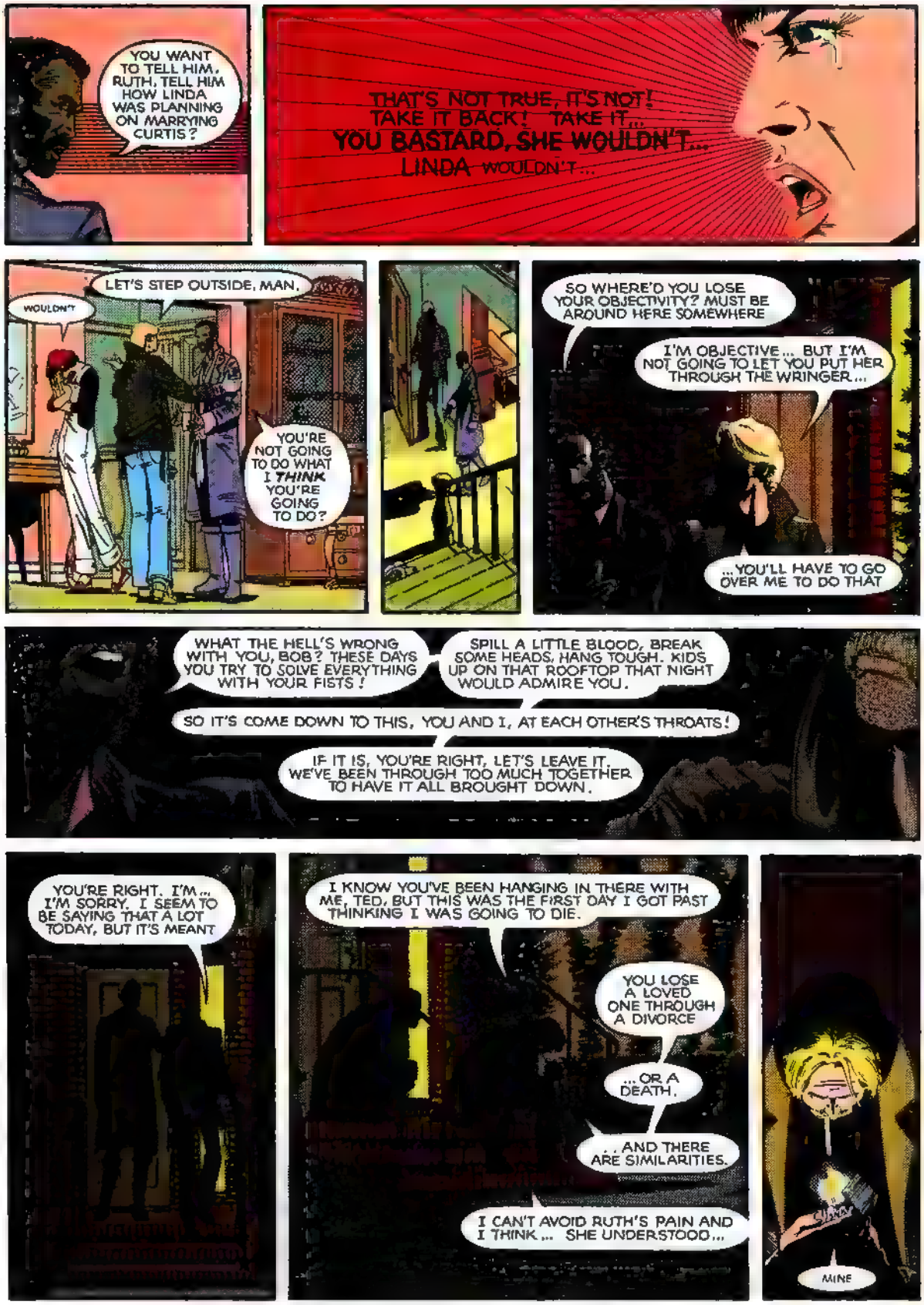
Not in the least


...SO I'M ONLY EIGHT, SEE, AND I'VE DEMOLISHED MY COUSIN'S SLED ON SUICIDE HILL, TURNED THE RUNNERS INTO METAL PRETZELS--
--AND I'VE GOT SNOW IN MY EYES, UP MY NOSE, DOWN MY PANTS, AND I'M BAWLING MY EYES OUT 'CAUSE I THINK BOTH MY LEGS ARE BROKEN--

--AND MY COUSIN GLARES DOWN AT THE WRECKAGE, AND ALL THE WHILE I'M SOUNDING PITIFUL... AND HE CRIES, "YOU SON OF A BITCH, I KNEW YOU'D DO IT, YOU KILLED MY SLED!"
THAT'S WONDERFUL. I MEAN THE STORY, NOT ABOUT YOUR LEG.

HI. REMEMBER ME? I GOT YOUR MESSAGE FROM THE ANSWERING SERVICE THAT YOU'D BE HERE, oh, COUPLE HOURS BACK. RENDEVOUS POINT, REMEMBER?
YEAH, LOST TRACK OF THE TIME. RUTH AND I GOT TO TALKING.
I ENJOYED IT


THIS IS HOME SWEET HOME. RATHER LONELY THESE DAYS. LOT OF THESE NICK-NACKS, LINDA GAVE THEM TO ME.
HER WARDROBE IS STILL HERE. SHAMPOO IN ITS NICHE. SILLY THINGS.
I SHOULD GET RID OF THE REMINDERS--
--BUT I DON'T WANT TO THROW ALL THE PAST AWAY. I TREASURE IT... AND WONDER--
--IF I WILL EVER HAVE A TIME OF SUCH RESPONSIVE LOVE AGAIN.
WELL, MY MOM TELLS ME THAT EVENTUALLY ANOTHER WOMAN WILL COME INTO MY LIFE.
MY PARTNER OFTEN PUTS HIS FOOT IN HIS MOUTH. HOWEVER THAT DOES NOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT YOU SENT US AFTER HAROLD DEVONSHIRE WHERE MY MAN HERE OUTDID HIMSELF.
HE'S BLOWN IT BEFORE BUT HE WAS IN RARE FORM.
AND TOMORROW WE'RE DUE TO CATCH MOSES RAFFERTY AT HIS OFFICE--
--BUT YOU NEVER TOLD US ABOUT CURTIS BLAKESLEY...
DROP IT, MAN. LEAVE IT BE.
I CAN'T AND YOU KNOW IT!
NO, I DON'T!
RUTH'S BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH. DON'T PUSH IT.


YOU WANT TO TELL HIM, RUTH, TELL HIM HOW LINDA WAS PLANNING ON MARRYING CURTIS?
THAT'S NOT TRUE, IT'S NOT! TAKE IT BACK! TAKE IT... YOU BASTARD, SHE WOULDN'T... LINDA WOULDN'T...
LET'S STEP OUTSIDE, MAN.
WOULDN'T
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DO WHAT I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO DO?
SO WHERE'D YOU LOSE YOUR OBJECTIVITY? MUST BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE
I'M OBJECTIVE... BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU PUT HER THROUGH THE WRINGER...
...YOU'LL HAVE TO GO OVER ME TO DO THAT
WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH YOU, BOB? THESE DAYS YOU TRY TO SOLVE EVERYTHING WITH YOUR FISTS!
SPILL A LITTLE BLOOD, BREAK SOME HEADS, HANG TOUGH. KIDS UP ON THAT ROOFTOP THAT NIGHT WOULD ADMIRE YOU.
SO IT'S COME DOWN TO THIS, YOU AND I, AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS!
IF IT IS, YOU'RE RIGHT, LET'S LEAVE IT. WE'VE BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH TOGETHER TO HAVE IT ALL BROUGHT DOWN.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M... I'M SORRY. I SEEM TO BE SAYING THAT A LOT TODAY, BUT IT'S MEANT
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN HANGING IN THERE WITH ME, TED, BUT THIS WAS THE FIRST DAY I GOT PAST THINKING I WAS GOING TO DIE.
YOU LOSE A LOVED ONE THROUGH A DIVORCE
...OR A DEATH.
...AND THERE ARE SIMILARITIES.
I CAN'T AVOID RUTH'S PAIN AND I THINK... SHE UNDERSTOOD...
CLANG
MINE

GOING HUNGRY

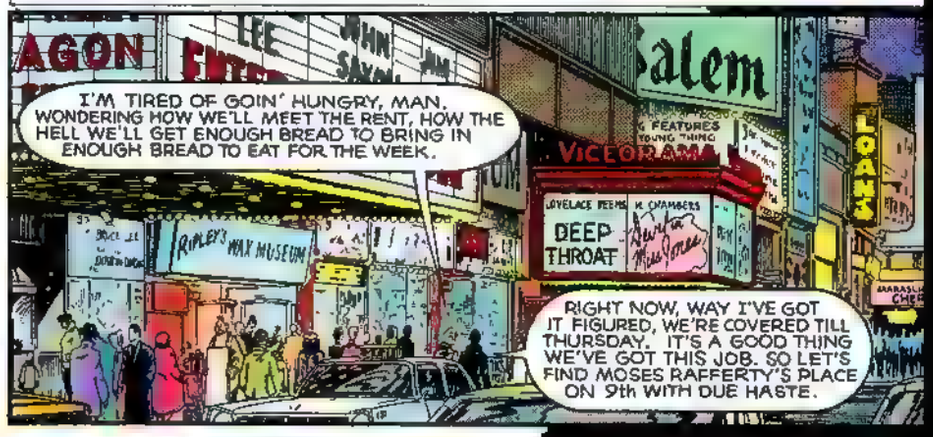
42nd Street is like a neon dinosaur on the verge of extinction Here, the rule is, you keep walking, unless you specifically stop for something.

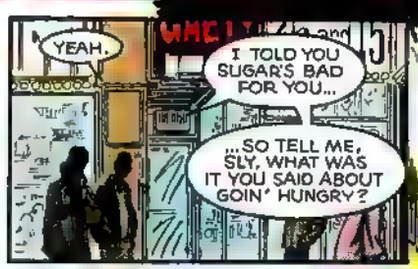
Denning and Rainier pass movie houses with censored versions of Deep Throat and The Devil and Miss Jones playing across the street from establishments offering uncensored live fake sex shows (go figure that one), simulated S&M acts with a whips and leather decor (And what do you do for relaxation when the work-day ends, darling?) while two doors down a sedate foreign newspaper and magazine shop caters to international respectability

Does the clientele ever cross over? Rainier wonders

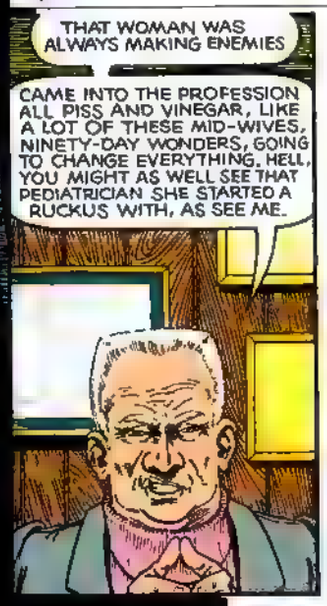
They pass under urgent billboards, between Broadway and 8th Avenue, all double features, in cinemas with urine-scented interiors. The marquees seem at war with the art theaters opening with bureaucratic fanfare on 9th Avenue. And yet, on the sidewalks, the hustlers, the converts, the cool, uncool, spaced, drunk, straight, dealers, all seem unaware of the battle

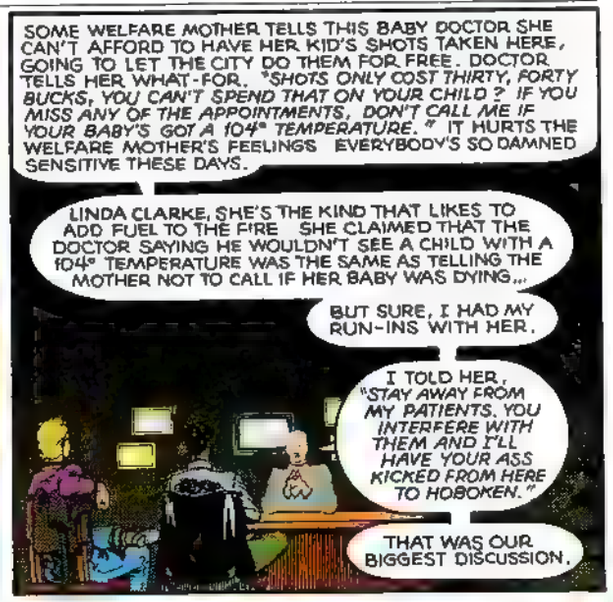
Where will they move to? Rainier asks himself. *Uptown? Downtown? City renewal programs do not stamp out the people prowling the turf, so where do they make their next haven? Or is this gaudy, neon dinosaur nowhere near dying?*


I'M TIRED OF GOIN' HUNGRY, MAN, WONDERING HOW WE'LL MEET THE RENT, HOW THE HELL WE'LL GET ENOUGH BREAD TO BRING IN ENOUGH BREAD TO EAT FOR THE WEEK.
RIGHT NOW, WAY I'VE GOT IT FIGURED, WE'RE COVERED TILL THURSDAY. IT'S A GOOD THING WE'VE GOT THIS JOB. SO LET'S FIND MOSES RAFFERTY'S PLACE ON 9th WITH DUE HASTE.
VICEORAMA
DEEP THROAT
RIPLEY'S WAX MUSEUM
LOANS



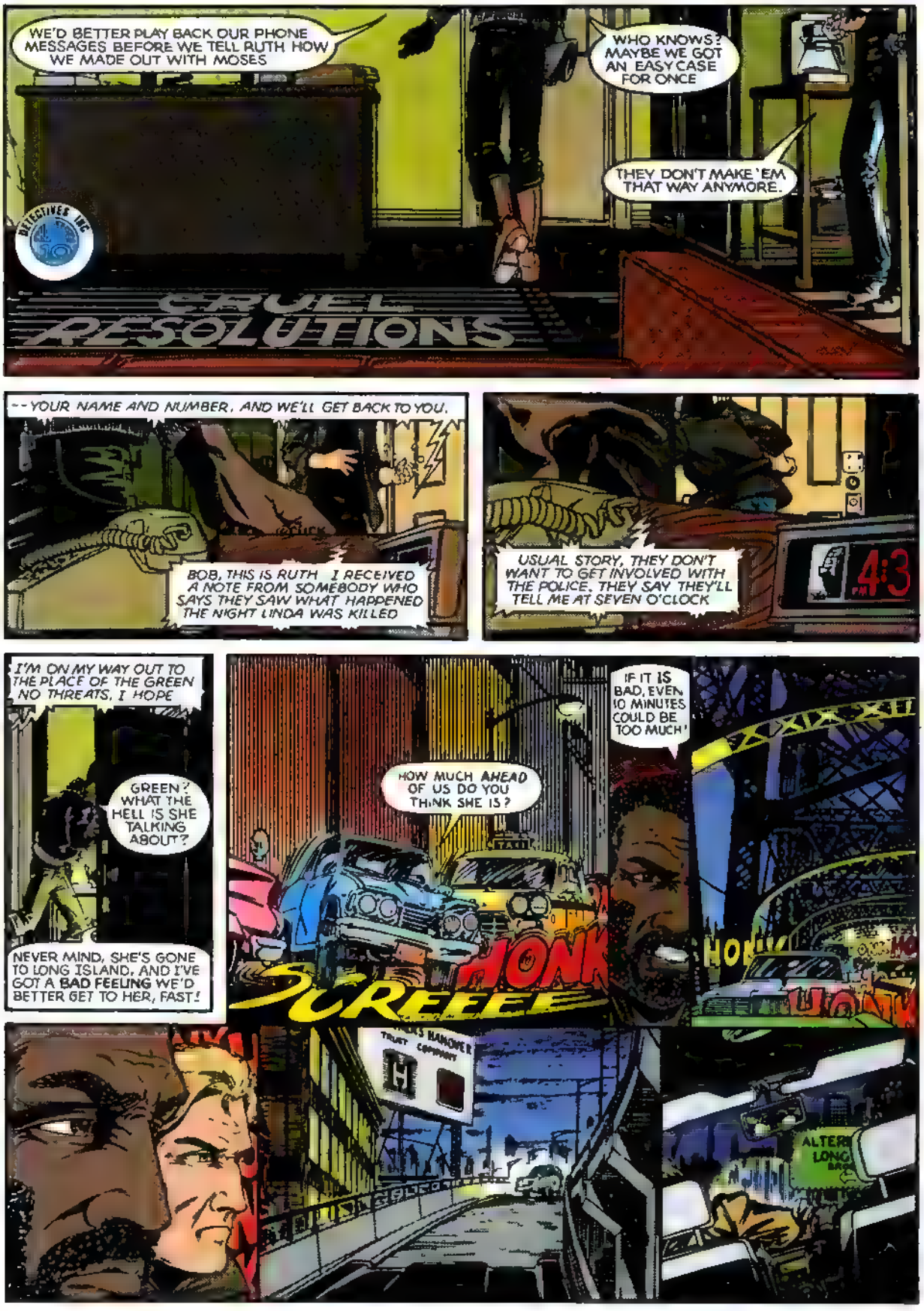
Moses Rafferty cannot repress the sneer that comes to his lips at the mention of Linda Clarke's name, and, as Rainier and Denning sit before his judgment throne of expensive mahogany, Rainier cannot help but visualize young couples sitting before this desk, wanting to ask questions, told to do as they are told, don't question the mysteries of medicine, of which you know nothing, and don't need to know since I know, and then, the paternal smile after the reprimand.


THAT WOMAN WAS ALWAYS MAKING ENEMIES
CAME INTO THE PROFESSION ALL PISS AND VINEGAR, LIKE A LOT OF THESE MID-WIVES, NINETY-DAY WONDERS, GOING TO CHANGE EVERYTHING. HELL, YOU MIGHT AS WELL SEE THAT PEDIATRICIAN SHE STARTED A RUCKUS WITH, AS SEE ME.


SOME WELFARE MOTHER TELLS THIS BABY DOCTOR SHE CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE HER KID'S SHOTS TAKEN HERE, GOING TO LET THE CITY DO THEM FOR FREE. DOCTOR TELLS HER WHAT-FOR. "SHOTS ONLY COST THIRTY, FORTY BUCKS, YOU CAN'T SPEND THAT ON YOUR CHILD? IF YOU MISS ANY OF THE APPOINTMENTS, DON'T CALL ME IF YOUR BABY'S GOT A 104° TEMPERATURE." IT HURTS THE WELFARE MOTHER'S FEELINGS EVERYBODY'S SO DAMNED SENSITIVE THESE DAYS.
LINDA CLARKE, SHE'S THE KIND THAT LIKES TO ADD FUEL TO THE FIRE SHE CLAIMED THAT THE DOCTOR SAYING HE WOULDN'T SEE A CHILD WITH A 104° TEMPERATURE WAS THE SAME AS TELLING THE MOTHER NOT TO CALL IF HER BABY WAS DYING...
BUT SURE, I HAD MY RUN-INS WITH HER.
I TOLD HER, "STAY AWAY FROM MY PATIENTS. YOU INTERFERE WITH THEM AND I'LL HAVE YOUR ASS KICKED FROM HERE TO HOBOKEN."
THAT WAS OUR BIGGEST DISCUSSION.

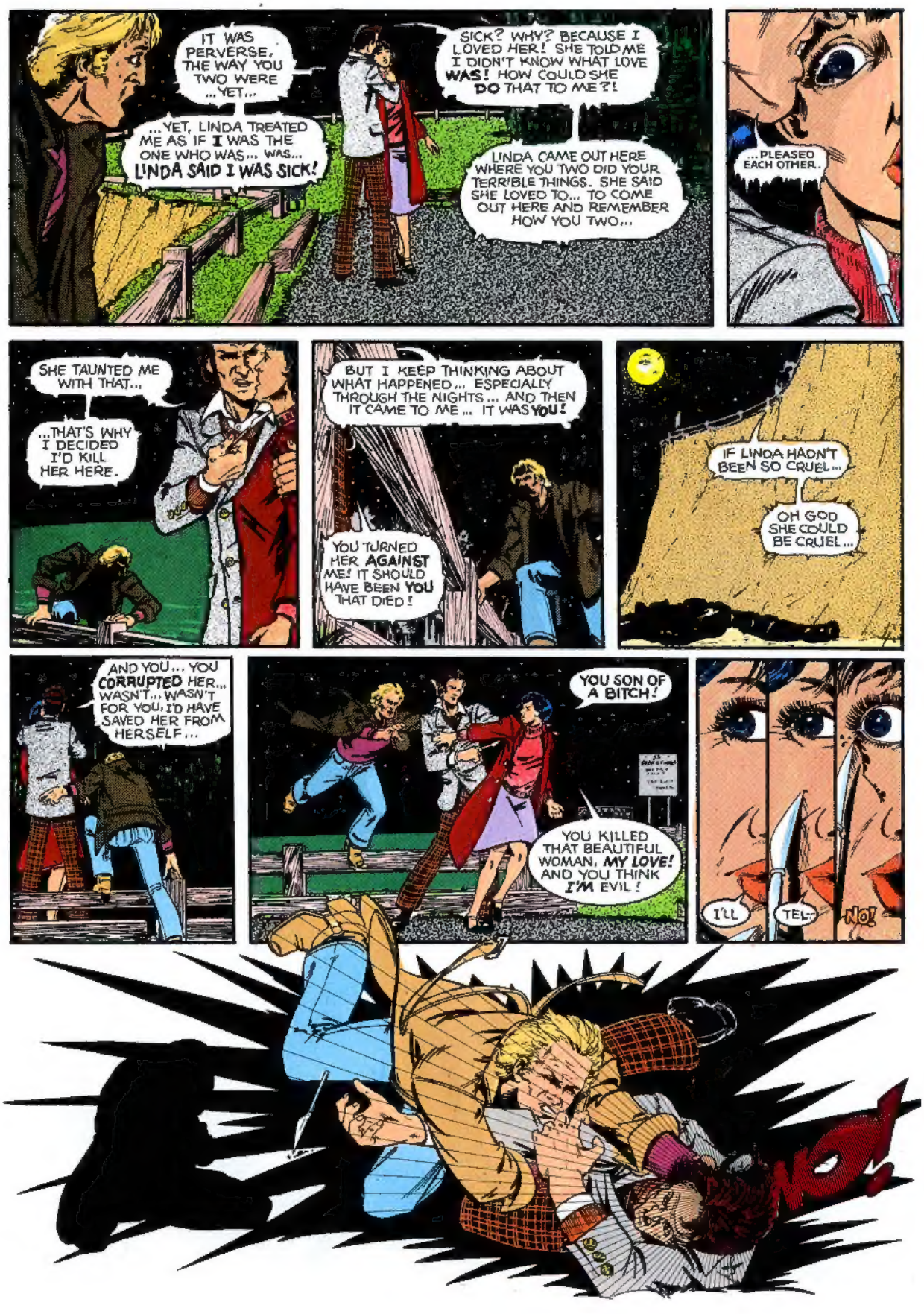
I THINK SHE GOT THE POINT. SHE BETTER HAVE. THAT TYPE, THEY'RE OUT TO MAKE A NAME FOR THEMSELVES. I SUPPOSE SHE WAS HOPING THE NEWSPAPERS WOULD DO A FEATURE ON HER.
ISN'T IT POSSIBLE SHE DID IT BECAUSE SHE WAS CONCERNED?
NO.

PROFESSION YOU GUYS ARE IN, AND YOU DON'T KNOW HER KIND? YOU CHECK OUT PEOPLE LIKE THAT, THEY'VE ALL GOT FEET OF CLAY. SPEND THEIR TIME BAD-MOUTHING THE REST OF US, THEN EXPECT US TO PAT THEM ON THE BACK FOR IT
LISTEN, I HAVE TO CUT THIS OFF. I DON'T GET PAID $50 00 A VISIT FOR A CONVERSATION WITH YOU GUYS.

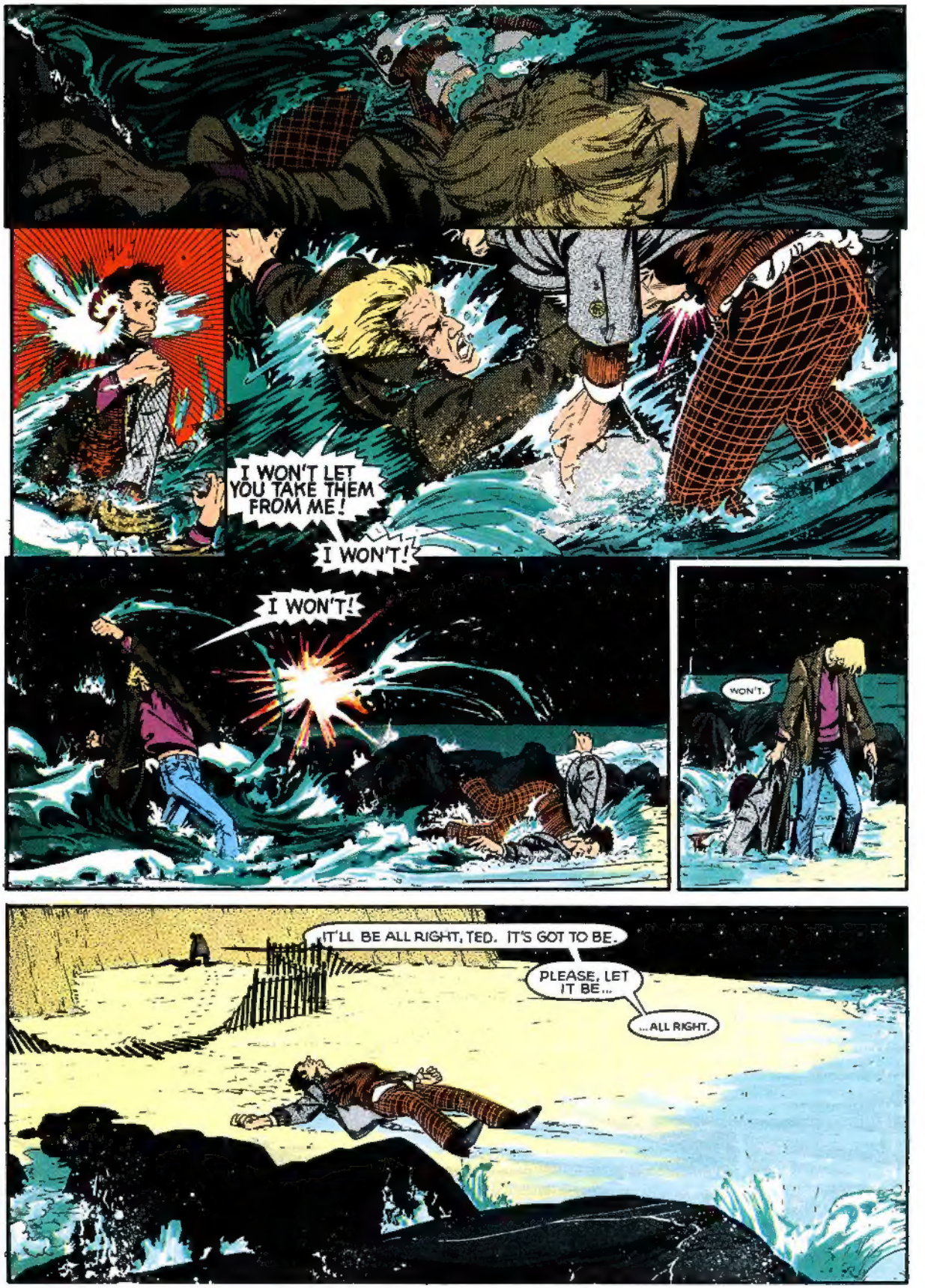

WE'D BETTER PLAY BACK OUR PHONE MESSAGES BEFORE WE TELL RUTH HOW WE MADE OUT WITH MOSES
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE WE GOT AN EASY CASE FOR ONCE
THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM THAT WAY ANYMORE.
DETECTIVES INC
CRUEL RESOLUTIONS
--YOUR NAME AND NUMBER, AND WE'LL GET BACK TO YOU.
BOB, THIS IS RUTH I RECEIVED A NOTE FROM SOMEBODY WHO SAYS THEY SAW WHAT HAPPENED THE NIGHT LINDA WAS KILLED
USUAL STORY, THEY DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE POLICE. THEY SAY THEY'LL TELL ME AT SEVEN O'CLOCK
4:3
I'M ON MY WAY OUT TO THE PLACE OF THE GREEN NO THREATS, I HOPE
GREEN? WHAT THE HELL IS SHE TALKING ABOUT?
NEVER MIND, SHE'S GONE TO LONG ISLAND, AND I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING WE'D BETTER GET TO HER, FAST!
HOW MUCH AHEAD OF US DO YOU THINK SHE IS?
IF IT IS BAD, EVEN 10 MINUTES COULD BE TOO MUCH!
HONK
SCREEEE
TAXI
HONK
TRUST COMPANY
ALTER LONG BA

HONK
WAY
EXIT
HONK
JONES BE
RT MOSES
TE PARK
3 MI
HONK
YOU TRY TO FIND HER UP HERE... I'LL TAKE THE BEACH!
RUTH! -- RUTH HAMILTON! THIS IS TED DENNING!
RUTH! C'MON, RUTH, I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING DUMBER TO SHOUT THAN CAN YOU HEAR ME!
CAN YOU?
HEAR ME?
QUITE CLEARLY
UNFORTUNATELY THERE'S NOBODY BUT YOU AND ME IN THE PLACE
SCREEEE

SCREEEE
STAY WHERE YOU ARE RUTH, RIGHT THERE! THERE'S NO SENSE IN RUNNING.
IT TOOK A LONG TIME FOR ME TO DECIDE TO GET YOU OUT HERE... I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET YOU GET AWAY!
CURTIS, YOU STUPID SON OF A BITCH! WHAT DID YOU DO!? I MEAN, YOU HIT HIM! YOU RAN RIGHT INTO.
IT'S YOUR FAULT, RUTH!
IF YOU'D COME ALONE, THE WAY YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO, NO ONE ELSE WOULD HAVE BEEN HURT.
YOU CAN BLAME YOURSELF FOR EVERYTHING... WHAT YOU DID TO ALL OF US. YOU RUINED OUR LIVES!
DAMN
CURTIS, PLEASE, JESUS, PUT THE SCALPAL AWAY, CURTIS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. IT'S ALL CRAZY TALK... NOT REAL, CURTIS.
PLEASE.. DON'T CUT ME


IT WAS PERVERSE, THE WAY YOU TWO WERE ...YET...
...YET, LINDA TREATED ME AS IF I WAS THE ONE WHO WAS... WAS... LINDA SAID I WAS SICK!
SICK? WHY? BECAUSE I LOVED HER! SHE TOLD ME I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT LOVE WAS! HOW COULD SHE DO THAT TO ME?!
LINDA CAME OUT HERE WHERE YOU TWO DID YOUR TERRIBLE THINGS. SHE SAID SHE LOVED TO... TO COME OUT HERE AND REMEMBER HOW YOU TWO...
...PLEASED EACH OTHER.
SHE TAUNTED ME WITH THAT...
...THAT'S WHY I DECIDED I'D KILL HER HERE.
BUT I KEEP THINKING ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED... ESPECIALLY THROUGH THE NIGHTS... AND THEN IT CAME TO ME... IT WAS YOU!
YOU TURNED HER AGAINST ME! IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN YOU THAT DIED!
IF LINDA HADN'T BEEN SO CRUEL...
OH GOD SHE COULD BE CRUEL...
AND YOU... YOU CORRUPTED HER... WASN'T... WASN'T FOR YOU, I'D HAVE SAVED HER FROM HERSELF...
YOU SON OF A BITCH!
YOU KILLED THAT BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, MY LOVE! AND YOU THINK I'M EVIL!
I'LL
TEL--
NO!
NO!

I'M GOING TO FINISH IT! YOU! HER!

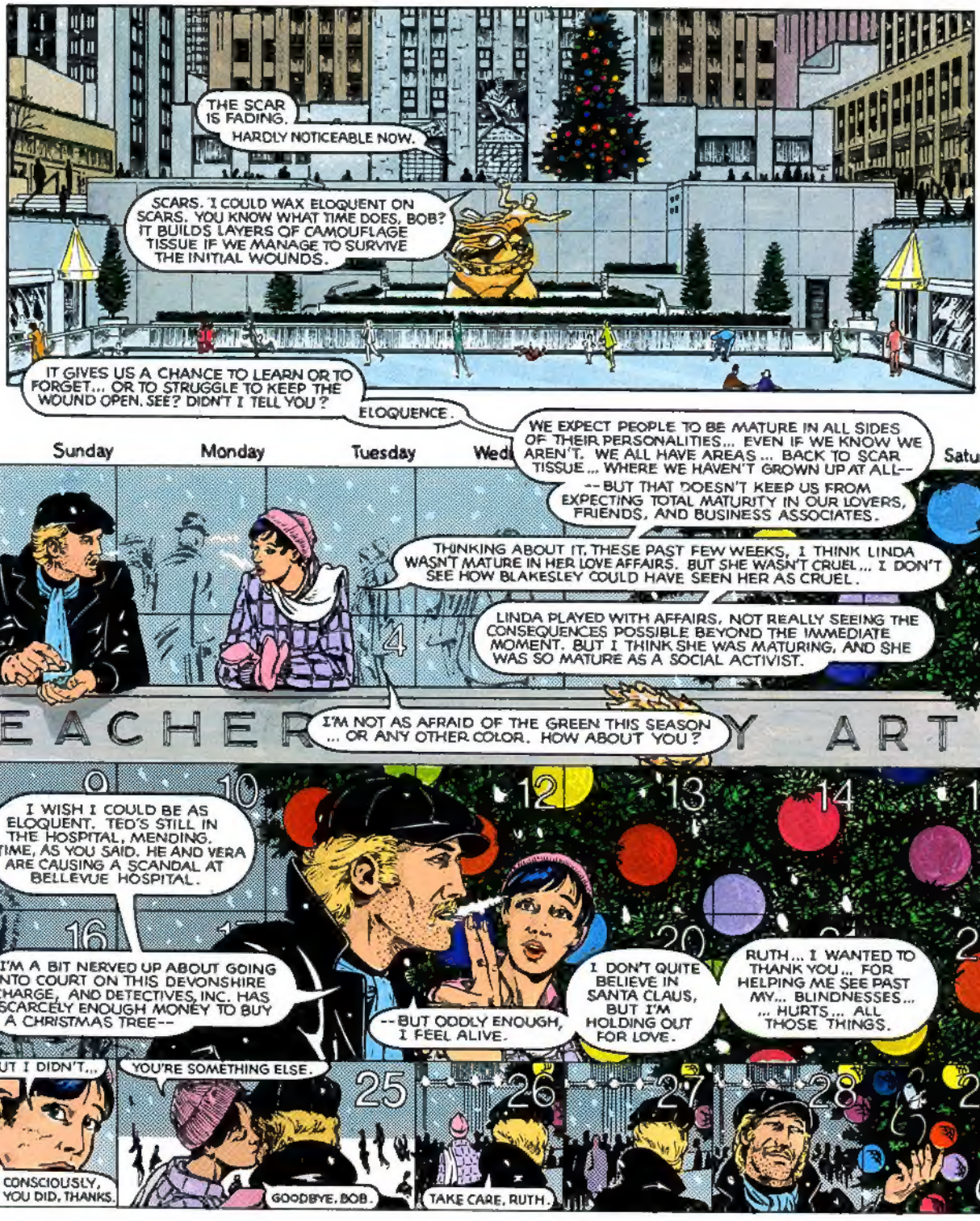

I WON'T LET YOU TAKE THEM FROM ME!
I WON'T!
I WON'T!
WON'T.
IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT, TED. IT'S GOT TO BE.
PLEASE, LET IT BE...
...ALL RIGHT.

EPILOGUE

December

November
S M T W T F S
1 2 3
4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15 16 17
18 19 20 21 22 23 24
25 26 27 28 29 30

January
S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30 31


THE SCAR IS FADING.
HARDLY NOTICEABLE NOW.
SCARS. I COULD WAX ELOQUENT ON SCARS. YOU KNOW WHAT TIME DOES, BOB? IT BUILDS LAYERS OF CAMOUFLAGE TISSUE IF WE MANAGE TO SURVIVE THE INITIAL WOUNDS.
IT GIVES US A CHANCE TO LEARN OR TO FORGET... OR TO STRUGGLE TO KEEP THE WOUND OPEN. SEE? DIDN'T I TELL YOU?
ELOQUENCE.
Sunday
Monday
Tuesday
Saturday
WE EXPECT PEOPLE TO BE MATURE IN ALL SIDES OF THEIR PERSONALITIES... EVEN IF WE KNOW WE AREN'T. WE ALL HAVE AREAS... BACK TO SCAR TISSUE... WHERE WE HAVEN'T GROWN UP AT ALL--
--BUT THAT DOESN'T KEEP US FROM EXPECTING TOTAL MATURITY IN OUR LOVERS, FRIENDS, AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATES.
THINKING ABOUT IT, THESE PAST FEW WEEKS, I THINK LINDA WASN'T MATURE IN HER LOVE AFFAIRS. BUT SHE WASN'T CRUEL... I DON'T SEE HOW BLAKESLEY COULD HAVE SEEN HER AS CRUEL.
LINDA PLAYED WITH AFFAIRS, NOT REALLY SEEING THE CONSEQUENCES POSSIBLE BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE MOMENT. BUT I THINK SHE WAS MATURING, AND SHE WAS SO MATURE AS A SOCIAL ACTIVIST.
I'M NOT AS AFRAID OF THE GREEN THIS SEASON ... OR ANY OTHER COLOR. HOW ABOUT YOU?
I WISH I COULD BE AS ELOQUENT. TED'S STILL IN THE HOSPITAL, MENDING. TIME, AS YOU SAID. HE AND VERA ARE CAUSING A SCANDAL AT BELLEVUE HOSPITAL.
I'M A BIT NERVED UP ABOUT GOING INTO COURT ON THIS DEVONSHIRE CHARGE, AND DETECTIVES, INC. HAS SCARCELY ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY A CHRISTMAS TREE--
--BUT ODDLY ENOUGH, I FEEL ALIVE.
I DON'T QUITE BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUS, BUT I'M HOLDING OUT FOR LOVE.
RUTH... I WANTED TO THANK YOU... FOR HELPING ME SEE PAST MY... BLINDNESSES... ... HURTS... ALL THOSE THINGS.
BUT I DIDN'T...
NOT CONSCIOUSLY, BUT YOU DID, THANKS.
YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE.
GOODBYE, BOB.
TAKE CARE, RUTH.